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Contents: Fairly complete statement on life of Baird Gibson & family of Pocahontas County from 1770 to date of civil War. Gives description of pioneer home and pioneer life. Mention of early school teachers and ministers.

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Price, N. History of Pocahontas County, W. Va.

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From family records of the Gibsons and History of Rev W T Price's History of Pocahontas County.

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MEMOIRS OF OLD CITIZENS OF POCAHONTAS COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA.

This manuscript reveals the manner of living conditions more than a century ago. It was one of the diaries of journals of a citizen without any intent of becoming history.

In our researches into the fundation of American life little attention has been given to the first children of the pioneers. Their part in the development of the New World was small when it is considered from historical viewpoint. Sociologically it was of great moment. Upon them depended the course of the social system that their fathers were creating.

In the pioneers whom we subject to diligent research, there was but a temporary structure, but in the children and their children's children, was the future of the Western World.

David Gibson, son of the pioneer Gibsons, moved to Old Field Fork of Elk, Pocahontas County in 1822, and died there in 1861. He married Mary Sharp, who was born September 10, 1799. The pioneer home was where Jacob Sharp now lives. He was married May 25, 1819. Their children were:

William Gibson, born June 22, 1823

John S. Gibson, born November 27, 1824

James S. Gibson born March 12, 1827

Dr. David W. Gibson, born July 4, 1829

Sarah E. Gibson, born January 14, 1835
Jacob C. Gibson, born June 14, 1837
Mary J. Gibson, born April 7, 1841
Nancy Ann Gibson, born March 24, 1843

Willaim Gibson married Polly Gay (daughter of Samuel Gay) who was born October 27th, 1823.
David Gibson had a fine farm consisting of one thousand acres of fine land in the blue grass, limestone valley of Old Field Fork of Elk. They raised grain, cattle and sheep, also flax. They pulled the flax and spread it on the ground until it got rain to bleach it, then it was gathered into small sheaves like a sheaf of wheat then put in some dry place ready for working; it was then made into fine linen for table cloths and clothing. The tow or coarser part was used for making bed ticks and clothes for men.

The wool was spun into yarn and woven into cloth at home.

The school house was a log structure. A fireplace took up one whole side. The pupils cut the great back-log and rolled it in at noon each day while the girls and teacher swept the house. They had a dirt floor with split logs in which wooden pins were inserted for seats. A space was left open on each side over which was pasted greased paper, for windows. The pupils used squares of slate rock for slates, taken from the bed of a branch of Elk River; their

~~their~~ pencils were of red soapstone gathered from the hills.

The pioneers also held preaching services in the little log school house. The congregation was Presbyterian, but it was seldom that they could have a minister to fill the pulpit, so the members went to the Methodist Church with the exception of Mary Gibson, who was loyal to her Church (Presbyterian).

Later a nice frame Presbyterian Church was erected and named "Mary Gibson Memorial Chapel" in honor and in memory of faithful Mary Gibson. Later David Gibson, Jr. built a grist mill and saw mill. The saw worked "up and down".

School teachers and Ministers.

The first school teacher was Mrs. Sarah Sharp, a daughter of David Hannah. The next teacher was Miss Nora Moore of Hillsboro. She taught in an old store house. It is not definitely known who the first pioneer Minister was. Lorenza Dow is tho't to have been one of them and Rev. M. Moore, later Rev. James E. Moore and Rev. M.D. Dunlap was one of the Presbyterian Ministers who preached on Elk.

The forests were full of wild game; deer, buffalo, bear wild turkeys and pheasants. Wild turkeys were caught in pens--some of them so large that it was difficult to manage them. James Gibson gives us an incident of his grand-father going into the forest where he had a turkey pen. He had

many sumptuous meals from the fine turkeys he caught. One day he found a very large gobler in the pen. He found it a difficult task in getting him under control. Finally he took off his home knit sustpenders and tied his feet, then took him out of the pen, but the turkey kept up the fight with his strong wings and finally got away, taking Mr. Gibson's suspenders with him.

Mr. Robert Gibson has in his possession a small Bible that had been in the Gibson family one hundred and sixteen years.

John B. Hannah was a pioneer resident of Old Field Fork of Elk. The Ancestral home was built of logs, but was commodious and comfortable. He married Margaret McClure. His children Samuel D. Hannah, now aged 84 years, Ellis Hannah, Boud Hannah and Mary Hannah, wife of John Beverage of Clover Lick, West Virginia, Nancy Hannah married Fletcher Dilley. The same kind of school house--log with greased paper for windows were used by the Hannah's. John B. Hannah often went out before breakfast and brought in his fat deer, they were so plentiful. Their first school teacher was Maggie Moore, sister of Nora Moore. They were daughters of John and Sallie Moore, pioneers from Ireland. Their home was in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County.

During the Civil War no battles were fought, both Armies passed through. Firing was kept up as they passed by bush whackers.

Gen. Robert E. Lee went over this road to Valley Mountain. The citizens would drive their cows and horses

[illegible] mentioned.

back into the mountain forests to keep the soldiers from driving them away or killing them. They would burn rails around the hay stacks and then feed the hay to their horses. They also borrowed or took away with them cooking utensils; the women would hide their maple sugar and dried fruits to keep the soldiers from taking them. One place they hid them was to tie them to the cords of the old fashioned beds and have the covers drape the bed almost to the floor. No one would suspect the women of hiding anything in that way or place.

John B. Hannah was the son of David Hannah Senior. His sons were Robert, Joe, William and David, two sisters Mary Snider and Bettie Hannah.

The farms were large and rich. The work was done with oxen in pioneer days. They hauled many heavy loads with oxen for miles, going long distances for supplies, a slow but sure way.

David Gibson, the Pocahontas pioneer came from Augusta County near Waynesboro, Virginia. About 1770 he located near Gibson's Knob. One of his sons, John moved to Indiana where his descendents now live. A daughter, Mary, died in early youth. Sally married Sampson Ochiltree and lived near Buckeye. Elizabeth married Joseph Buckley and lived on a neighborhood farm now owned by Levi Gay.

David Gibson Junior, another son located on Old Field Fork of Elk. The Gibson familay on Elk consisted of five sons and three daughters. Some members of this family have been mentioned.

David, a well known physician, married Elizabeth Stalnaker, daughter of Warwick Stalnaker of Randolph County. James Gibson married Jennie Friel, daughter of John Friel who was killed in battle on Allegheny Mountain in 1861 (December) Jacob Gibson married a Miss Wamsley of Randolph County. He was killed during the War near Huttonsville in a skirmish with Jenkins Cavalry. Elizabeth Gibson married James McClure near Edray. Mary married Rankin Poage of Edray. Nancy married Samuel M. Gay of Indian Draft. The Gibsons all had comfortable homes and fine farms located on the State Road--the famous Seneca Trail. They are all noted for their hospitality and cheerful happy dispositions. For years the homes of the "Gibson's" were open to all ministers and David Gibson's home was at the service of the preacher and most of the preaching on upper Elk was at his home.

The story of their lives should be told for the instruction and encouragement of the generations following.